

May 2014 bulletin board

The National Governors' Association (NGA) is an independent charity that aims to improve the education standards and well-being of children and young people through supporting and promoting outstanding governance in all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools. As the only national representative body for school governors and academy trustees, we take our responsibilities seriously; we want to represent and support governors as effectively as possible. This bulletin board is distributed to local governor associations and local authorities so they can keep their schools up to date with changes and developments in governance and the NGA. If you find this information useful and you're not a member of the NGA, please consider joining us; this is only a fraction of the material we produce for governors. See section I for details.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact [Laura Owen](#).

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A. Updated “Keeping children safe in education” guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) has published [updated statutory guidance](#) for governing bodies both of LA maintained schools and academies, which replaces ‘*safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*’ from 2006. The new guidance is less extensive than previously, but is more detailed than the draft guidance. In addition, it includes information on safer recruitment, what staff should know and do, different types of safeguarding issues, and dealing with allegations against staff. It also recommends that governing bodies consider how children may be taught about safeguarding as part of the curriculum.

One of the main changes is that although governing bodies (of LA maintained schools) must still ensure that at least one member of a recruitment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training, this training will no longer be subject to approval by the Secretary of State. The training should be ‘appropriate’ and should as a minimum cover the contents of the guidance document. The guidance also suggests that schools may want to seek advice on training from their Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). NGA has raised the possible quality assurance issues of non-approved training with the DfE, and in undertaking training, governing bodies should assure themselves that the training provider has a track-record in providing relevant training.

The statutory guidance also states that school and college governors should be treated in the same way as other volunteers and that DBS checks should only be requested if they undertake ‘regulated activity,’ which in most cases will not be the case. The guidance does make clear that governing bodies and proprietors can request enhanced DBS checks as part of the recruitment process. Academies/free schools should check their articles of association as in a number of cases these require DBS checks to be undertaken. Read more about safeguarding in this [Governing Matters article](#).

B. Education news

1. Special school data dashboard released

Ofsted has released a new data dashboard for special schools. For special schools that have pupils working at National Curriculum level, the mainstream School Data Dashboard measures are shown. Where pupils are operating below the national curriculum, this is on performance scales, additional measures are displayed for the attainment and progress of these pupils. Data has been released for key stages one, two and four.

[Find your dashboard](#)

2. Changes to GCSEs and A Levels

Following concurrent consultations last year, the DfE and Ofqual have announced the latest changes to [GCSEs](#) and [A Levels](#). Find out more in the NGA members' area.

[Ofqual announcement – changes to GCSEs and A Levels](#)
[Written statement to Parliament](#)

3. David Blunkett publishes Labour's Policy Review into education structures

Last week, David Blunkett MP, the former Secretary of State for Education and Employment, published his report that makes recommendations for the Labour party's policy in relation to the education system after the next election. The report specifically looks at the framework and structures of the education system rather than details of /curriculum and qualifications. In particular, the report looks at the accountability structures at what has become known as the 'middle tier' level. The report states that the challenge is to provide 'sufficient autonomy to be able to drive standards from within the school, whilst at the same time providing accountability to protect the interests of pupils and safeguard the investment of public resources.'

In relation to governance, the document recognises the challenge inherent in being a governor or trustee, and recommends that more support and training be provided. The document also says that a Labour government would work with the National Governors' Association to ensure that best practice on governance is identified, developed and disseminated to governors/trustees.

For more information on this story, please see our [newsfeed](#).

4. Pupil Premium awards

The Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, and the Schools Minister, David Laws, announced the 2015 and 2016 Pupil Premium Awards yesterday. These will be an opportunity to showcase innovative and effective practice and to give public recognition to schools that are excelling in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Up to 500 schools will receive prizes. There will be a top prize of £250,000 for secondary schools and £100,000 for primary and special schools. Large regional prizes of up to £100,000 will also be awarded to schools across the country, alongside hundreds of smaller qualifier awards – so schools will have a good chance of being recognised with a prize.

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They are changing how schools will be assessed to reflect the fact that we want to reward sustained improvement over time in raising attainment of disadvantaged pupils. To win the larger prizes, schools will need to provide evidence of implementing effective strategies to improve achievement.

The 2015 Pupil Premium Awards are being run by the Department for Education in partnership with TES. Schools can find out more about the 2015 Pupil Premium Awards at www.pupilpremiumawards.co.uk. The awards ceremony will be held in March 2015.

C. Parliamentary news

MPs take further evidence on academies and free schools

The House of Commons Education Select Committee took further evidence on Wednesday as part of its ongoing inquiry into academies and free schools. NGA's Chief executive, Emma Knights gave evidence in the first session along with Lucy Heller (Chief executive of Ark Academy Trust) and John Clarke from Hampshire County Council. Read more on the [newsfeed](#).

[Education Select Committee Academy inquiry evidence – Parliament TV Story](#)

D. Improving practice

1. Improving science and maths in your secondary school

We are looking for input from school governors and leaders to develop an exciting, free resource from the Wellcome Trust for secondary schools across the country. We are developing a set of questions that governors can use to get to grips with science and maths in their school. It includes benchmarking data, evidence for the importance of science and maths and loads of great ideas for schools. Let us know if you're interested in being part of this exciting new project, which will be piloted starting in May 2014. We are interested in getting a good range of schools involved. Contact [Ellie](#) for details.

2. Partnership working between small, rural primaries

CfBT, an education charity, has [published findings](#) from a research project into partnerships in small rural schools in Lincolnshire, where the County Council has taken a strategic approach. A variety of partnership arrangements were in use, most informal, and the report measured the effect of this on school improvement. Performance of these schools has increased significantly since the approach began in 2012, and reports from Ofsted, governors and headteachers have suggested that the partnership was a crucial contributory factor. The work corroborates the NGA's own research: [The road to federation](#).

[Find out more about this story](#)

E. NGA news and resources

1. NGA publishes a governor role description

This week, NGA published a governor role description, adapted from *Welcome to Governance*. The document can be used to analyse your own role within the school, but also

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when you recruit new governors to make them aware of what is expected of them, and what the role is going to entail.

Download the role description free on the [NGA website](#).

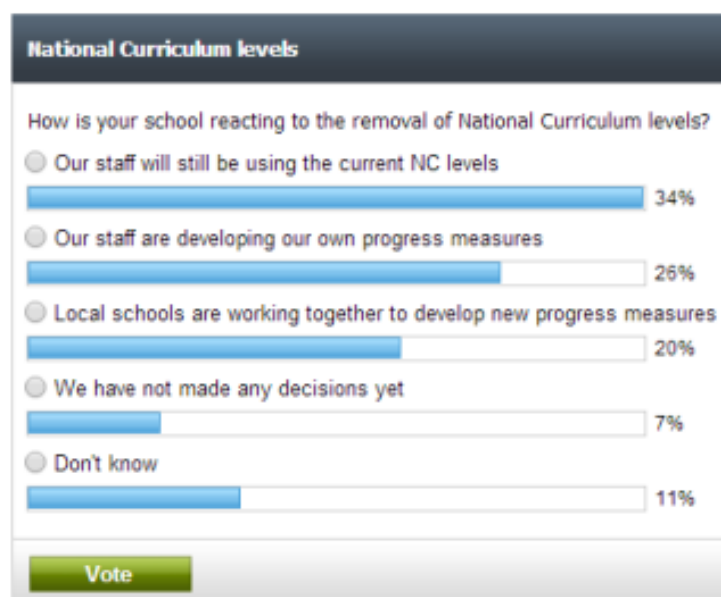
2. NGA Poll

Thank you to everyone who voted in the poll:

How is your school reacting to the removal of the National Curriculum levels?

Emma Knights, Chief Executive of NGA, spoke about how governors can get ready for the changes to the National Curriculum in an interview with the Department for Education. You can also find links to the government guidance on the curriculum in our [free governance resources pages](#).

Please take the time to participate in our new poll:



What financial information would you most like to receive from your Finance Department that you are not currently receiving?

Cash Flow Forecast
KPI Reporting (e.g. Pupil/Teacher ratio or Liquidity Ratios)
Graphical Finance Performance information (e.g. Charts/Graphs)

Fund Analysis of Carry Forward balances
Balance Sheet Reporting
I already receive all of the above
I would like to receive all of the above

F. Dates for your diary

1. Conference for chairs of local associations

NGA is holding its second conference for chairs of local associations on Saturday 10 May in Birmingham. The day will be focused on working together and learning from each other. There will be a report on the local associations' survey, along with discussions around how NGA can help you, succession planning, where you want to be in 3 years, and how to get there.

If you are the chair of an association and haven't yet booked a place, we are accepting late bookings; please email [Victoria](#).

2. Financial efficiency workshops: Dates released

The National College for Teaching and Leadership has developed a series of workshops to inform governors about their responsibilities. Workshops on performance related pay and

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RAISEonline have been taking place over the last few months, and we are pleased to announce that the financial efficiency workshops will be starting this month!

Who can attend?

Schools and academies may nominate up to 3 governors for a free place at all 3 workshops.

What's involved?

The workshops last for 3 hours with a lunch, tea or supper available depending on the timing of the workshop session.

The Leading Governance Partnership (led by the Eastern Leadership Centre and the National Governors' Association) is pleased to offer free half day workshops under license from the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). For more information, see the [Leading Governance website](#), where all workshops are now available to book.

Other licensees will also be offering the workshops: for details, see the [gov.uk website](#).

3. Festival of Education invitation

The Sunday Times and Wellington College Festival of Education is being held on 20-21 June at Wellington College in Berkshire. The NGA will be part of the "Inspiring Leaders" strand, along with ASCL, NASBM, and AGBIS. NGA members have been offered a 10% discount on tickets. Download [this letter of invitation](#) for the discount code and more information.

[More information on the Festival](#)

[Ticket prices](#)

G. Consultations

These consultations have been released since the last bulletin. Closing dates are for the organisation consulting. NGA is always interesting in hearing governors' views. Please email any comments, or a copy of your submission, to [Gillian Allcroft](#), NGA's Policy Manager.

1. [Revision to the SEN and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years](#)
Closing date: Tuesday 6 May 2014
2. [Consultation on Reforming GCSEs in Modern Foreign and Ancient Languages](#)
Closing date: Friday 23 May 2014
3. [Powers to delegate children's social care functions](#)
Closing date: Friday 30 May 2014
4. [Setting the grade standards of new GCSEs in England](#)
Closing date: Monday 30 June 2014

H. NGA partners

The Department of Health wants your views on school nurses

The Department of Health are exploring the health and wellbeing of school aged children. They would like to get a feel of the extent which governing bodies link and understand the role of school nursing services and what might need to be done to improve joined up working.

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They would be grateful if you would complete this short survey, which takes less than 5 minutes to complete. The results will be used to develop a resource for governors about working with school nurses.

I. NGA membership benefits

Governing bodies can join the NGA to receive more benefits. Every governor will gain access to the members' only area of the website, and receive the weekly newsletter. Members also receive generous discounts off our publications.

GOLD governing body membership: £260 ensures in addition that every governor receives NGA's magazine *Governing Matters*, free induction guides, additional event places, and is entitled to advice from the NGA, including **free access to our legal advice service**.

Standard governing body membership: £75 entitles you to five free copies of the bi-monthly magazine, discounts on publications, and a free place at members' events as well as the weekly newsletter and web resources.

Make sure your association is receiving all its benefits. If you have not yet given us the names, home addresses and email addresses of your executive members, or if these have changed, please send details to: membership@nga.org.uk.

